

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-1

NEW YORK TIMES
20 JUNE 1982

HAIG SAYS SOVIET HOLDS BIG SERIES OF MISSILE TESTS

FIRINGS 'UNPRECEDENTED'

Secretary, After Gromyko Talk,
Asserts the Activity Belies
Pledge on A-Arms Use

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN

Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. said yesterday that the Soviet Union had conducted an "unprecedented" series of strategic weapons tests in the last few days, casting doubt on Moscow's pledge that it would not be the first to use nuclear weapons.

Speaking at a news conference after two days of talks with Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko that totaled more than nine hours, Mr. Haig seemed determined to counter any perception that the Soviet Union was more interested than the United States in arms control.

The pledge that Moscow would not be the first to use nuclear weapons was made by Mr. Gromyko Tuesday in a speech at the United Nations disarmament conference.

Mr. Haig, after repeating the various arms control proposals made by President Reagan, said, "We hope the Soviet Union will negotiate seriously with us on the agenda now before us."

'Turn From Posturing'

He added that the United States hoped that the Russians would "turn from posturing to serious talks in the interest of peace."

Then Mr. Haig said that "only a few days after" Mr. Gromyko's speech, the Soviet Union undertook an unusually high level of strategic activity.

After detailing Soviet missile launchings and tests, he said, "Such activity belies by specific action the words put forth to the world audience here in New York this week."

Mr. Haig did not accuse the Soviet Union of violating any arms control agreements by the spurt of weapons activity. Asked to compare the activity with past Soviet practice, he said it was "unprecedented."

Intelligence information on missile launchings is highly classified and is usually not made public. Mr. Haig seemed eager to make it known for dramatic effect to reduce any political or public relations advantages that Mr. Gromyko might have achieved through his speech.

Many delegates said they regarded the Soviet presentation as a diplomatic coup because of the no-first-use pledge. Mr. Reagan made no such pledge.

Mr. Haig said the Soviet weapons activity consisted of a test of an antisatellite weapon, two launchings of land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, a launching of an SS-20 intermediate-range mobile ballistic missile, one launching of a submarine-based ballistic missile and two launchings of antiballistic missiles that intercepted incoming real or simulated missiles.

On another topic, the crisis in Lebanon, Mr. Haig said he and President Reagan had been in almost hourly contact with Washington's special envoy, Philip C. Habib, in his efforts to bring about an agreement by Lebanese factions for strengthening the central Government. He did not say how close such an accord was to being achieved.

Mr. Haig seemed defensive at the news conference as he sought to justify Mr. Reagan's arms control proposals as aimed at putting "United States-Soviet relations on a stable, constructive, long-term basis."

"We see potential advantages for both countries in every area" of relations, Mr. Haig went on.

He stressed that it was up to the Russians to "conduct their affairs with responsibility and restraint."

The disclosure of the Soviet strategic weapons activity was made by Mr. Haig at the end of his opening remarks to the press and was apparently designed to create an impression that the Soviet Union was engaged in improper action.

But when reporters pressed Mr. Haig, he did not accuse the Russians of violating any agreements. Rather, he said the United States was concerned by what he called "the unprecedented" activity.

An 'Integrated' Missile Test

Mr. Haig said the strategic activity was "integrated," suggesting that the Soviet Union might have been launching antiballistic missiles at land and submarine missiles.

When asked why he had not raised the matter with Mr. Gromyko, Mr. Haig said the scope of the activity had just been pulled together.

Mr. Haig said the United States was strongly opposed to the first use of any kind of force, nuclear or conventional. He said the Soviet pledge that attracted the most attention at the disarmament conference was "cosmetic."

The United States has contended that it cannot pledge to refrain from first use of nuclear weapons because the Soviet Union has a conventional force advantage in Europe, and is deterred from a massive conventional attack on American allies only by fear of nuclear retaliation.